(a) whether Government are aware that advanced and developed countries have guidelines for all the private broadcasters and Government Information and Media to follow the "FAIRNESS Doctrine" ro "Equal Time Policy";

(b) the extent to which Government would ensure that news media, audio media, visual media would give equal time to all the political parties and private individuals in the media;

(c) whether there are any such guidelines presently in operation or force;

(d) the steps taken by Government to first bring Government media like Doordarshan a strict follower of the principles of Equal Time Policy; and

(e) the steps proposed to be taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (e) Prasar Bharati has informed that AIR and Doordarshan follow a policy drawn up by Election Commission of India that provides for allotment of airtime on their National/Regional Networks to recognized political parties for political broadcasts during the run up to Parliamentary elections and State Assembly elections. AIR and Doordarshan also include political coverage in their news bulletins etc. on the basis of newsworthiness in a fair and balanced manner.

Financial irregularities in purchase of video projections and equipments

4118. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the serious financial irregularities have been committed by the various departments of his Ministry in the process of procurement of video projections and other equipments;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the terms and conditions were also not adhered to; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING.(SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) No financial irregularity has come to the notice of the Government in purchase of video projections and other

equipments by various departments except Directorate of Field Publicity (DFP), a Media Unit under this Ministry. Some financial irregularities were found to be committed by DFP in purchase of Portable Video Projectors (PVPs).

(c) and (d) The supplier of PVPs could not supply the equipments in stipulated time and was given extensions by DFP. DFP did not invoke the penalty clause for the delayed supply of the equipments as per the terms and conditions of the contract and also could not prevent increase in price of some of the PVPs over the quoted price by the supplier on account of rise in customs duty. Departmental Action has been initiated against the then Director General, DFP.

Terrestrial transmission for private players

4119. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are going to allow terrestrial transmission for the private players;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (c) Terrestrial television transmission in the country is currently being done by Prasar Bharati, the Public Service Broadcaster. The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has issued a Consultation Paper on "Issues relating to private terrestrial television broadcasting services". TRAI has not formulated its recommendations so far. The Government will take a view only after TRAI's recommendations are received.

Captive TV Channels and Community Radio Station Scheme

4120. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) the progress made by captive TV Channel and Community Radio Station Scheme started at the beginning of Tenth Five Year Plan; and